

## Comparing form four malay and chinese students' spoken english

### Abstract :

This research was carried out to compare form four Malay and Chinese students' English language speaking ability. Data for the study was obtained from The English of Malaysian School Students (EMAS) corpus (Arshad et al., 2002). Among others, EMAS corpus comprises form four Malay and Chinese students' recorded oral description of a picture series. Based on their oral descriptions of the picture series, WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2008) was used to gauge both ethnic groups' language productivity. The software called RANGE (Nation, 2002) was also used to gauge their vocabulary range and sophistication. The results of the study show that the Chinese students performed better in terms of language productivity, vocabulary range and sophistication. This means that they uttered more words, used wider and more difficult vocabulary than the Malay students during the oral description. Comparing the achievements of the different ethnic groups in terms of spoken English can be useful for healthy competition. It helps groups that lag behind learn from those which are ahead. It can also stimulate research on why students from some ethnic groups perform better than others in spoken English for diagnostic and remediation purposes.